

# **London Examinations GCE Ordinary Level**

## **Mark Scheme and Examiners' Report for English Language 7161**

**May/June 2000**

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Mark Scheme and Chief Examiner's Report  
May/June 2000

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161**

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### **Mark Scheme**

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## ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161, MARK SCHEME

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### Section A (30 marks)

#### Question 1 mark scheme

##### Passage One

- (a) It is close to disappearing or becoming extinct (1 mark)
- (b) Because it is so large / it grows to a metre across / it is easily seen (1 mark)
- (c) Because if a creature this size can disappear without it being noticed // this suggests many smaller creatures may have also disappeared (2 marks)
- (d) systematist // natural historian (2 marks)
- (e) Because there is no definitive list // so there may be duplications (2 marks)
- \* (f) diversity (line 9) difference, variety, variegation, lack of uniformity  
extinguishing (line 12) annihilating, removing, destroying  
bewilderingly (line 27) confusingly, puzzlingly  
dwindling (line 34) growing less/smaller, shrinking, decreasing in number or size, diminishing  
abrupt (line 38) sudden, immediate, sharp, instant  
catalogue (line 39) list, enter particulars of, enumerate, go into details, specify (6 marks)

##### Passage Two

- (g) They are translucent/semi-transparent (1 mark)
- (h) **Two** from: dead caterpillar, piece of (rose) petal, dried grass head or seed (2 marks)
- (i) **(mark first three attempts):**  
Coral,  
pearl,  
emerald,  
ivory (3 marks)

- (j) There was so much variety // that he was bewildered/distracted (2 marks)
- (k) **Two** from:  
crabs,  
chameleons,  
tigers (2 marks)
- (l) They were furry; they sounded like bears when they growled (2 marks)
- (m) **Two** from:  
caterpillars **or** ladybird (young),  
lace-wing flies or green gauze wing,  
trapdoor spiders (2 marks)
- \*(n) e.g. gave me immense pleasure **or** caused me enormous enjoyment – the  
important elements are synonyms for 'tremendous' and 'delight' intensifier  
needed e.g. so/very happy/overjoyed/ecstatic etc. (2 marks)

## Section B (35 marks)

### Question 2 mark scheme

Marks for this question are divided between content (20 marks) and expression and accuracy (15 marks).

#### Content

Count to 220 words

The marks for content are decided independently of expression or accuracy.

**One mark** for each of the following (or equivalent) points up to a maximum of 18 marks.

1. also known as natural historians / systematists
2. they distinguish creatures / animals / insects
3. to establish (family) groupings / classify
4. and count them / record / catalogue
5. they have found home area / location
6. and name
7. for approximately 1.7 million species / or 1.4 million species
8. they spread nets / spray insecticide
9. sample small areas
10. they can identify 10,000 / many thousands
11. of creatures in a specialist area / without checking
12. they can travel to faraway places and/or enjoy the attractions of nature
13. doing work which is valuable
14. in a career for which there is a demand
15. but no central list
16. so possible duplication / confusion
17. true number of species unknown
18. species disappearing or mass disappearance
19. problem of being overwhelmed/ too many to count
20. not enough taxonomists or only 7000
21. cost of travel to research areas very high / limited budgets
22. based in wrong places / far from research areas
23. there is a lack of encouragement

**2 marks** for appropriate tone, sense of purpose/audience.

## Expression and Accuracy

- (a) These are to be assessed as 'Good', 'Satisfactory' or 'Poor' according to the criteria given in the table below.

### Criteria for assessing continuous writing

Good	Answers will be confident in sentence structure and choice and range of vocabulary; generally they will be free of error; above all, they will demonstrate skill in communicating. In <b>Section C</b> they will be relevant (bearing in mind that this section is intended to give the candidate the opportunity of developing outwards the theme(s) of the passages in <b>Section A</b> ).
Satisfactory	Answers will demonstrate competence in the use of language to communicate. There will be errors, including perhaps an occasional gross error, but not so many mistakes as to affect the reader's comprehension, or as to introduce incoherence. The answers may, however, be pedestrian and undistinguished. In <b>Section C</b> they will deal relevantly with the subject.
Weak	Answers will contain passages that indicate a significant inability to communicate immediately with the reader: some of this writing will be difficult to follow. There will be many errors, a number of them 'main errors'. In <b>Section C</b> the more successful writing will be able to develop a general argument – in other words, communicate – even though there may be obscurity so that immediate understanding is impeded.

- (b) Initially select the central mark in the appropriate band. This mark may then be fine-tuned, by one or two marks up or down, within this band.

Band	Mark range
Good	15, 14, <b>13</b> , 12, 11
Satisfactory	10, 9, <b>8</b> , 7, 6
Weak	5, 4, <b>3</b> , 2, 1

- (c) The mark for expression and accuracy is not affected by the mark for content but reflects the quality (or lack of it) of such aspects as:

Sentence structure  
Range of vocabulary  
Control of grammar  
Spelling  
Punctuation

Errors in the work should be noted. These notes are a guide to the examiner – they are **not** totalled.

Note: Major errors include:

faulty sentence structure;  
faulty sentence division;  
mistakes of agreement;  
consistent misuse of words.

'Secretarial' errors include:

misspelling;  
minor punctuation errors;  
incorrect use, or omission, of inverted commas;  
misuse of capital letters;  
misuse of apostrophe.

The marks for content (C) and expression and accuracy (E/A) are recorded, as in the following example:

C + E/A  
**10+8 = 18**

## **Section C (35 marks)**

### **Question 3 mark scheme**

The whole answer is marked on impression. Length is ignored, although a very short answer will penalise itself in the final impression. As with Section B, 'major' and 'secretarial' errors are noted as a guide in reaching a mark.

Examiners then follow this procedure:

- (a) At the foot of the composition, list merits and weaknesses, along the following lines:

Merits	Weaknesses
sentence structure	inaccuracy
paragraphs	number of gross errors
argument	some obscurity

*These are a guide to the examiner, and are not totalled.*

- (b) In the light of the examiner's assessment of the work as a whole, taking into account



Content and Organisation  
Expression  
Accuracy

the work is placed in one of three bands (good, satisfactory, poor) by matching it to the criteria in the table over:

### Criteria for assessing continuous writing

Good	Answers will be confident in sentence structure and choice and range of vocabulary; generally they will be free of error; above all, they will demonstrate skill in communicating. In <b>Section C</b> they will be relevant (bearing in mind that this section is intended to give the candidate the opportunity of developing outwards the theme(s) of the passages in <b>Section A</b> ).
Satisfactory	Answers will demonstrate competence in the use of language to communicate. There will be errors, including perhaps an occasional gross error, but not so many mistakes as to affect the reader's comprehension, or as to introduce incoherence. The answers may, however, be pedestrian and undistinguished. In <b>Section C</b> they will deal relevantly with the subject.
Weak	Answers will contain passages that indicate a significant inability to communicate immediately with the reader: some of this writing will be difficult to follow. There will be many errors, a number of them 'main errors'. In <b>Section C</b> the more successful writing will be able to develop a general argument – in other words, communicate – even though there may be obscurity so that immediate understanding is impeded.

- (c) The work is placed into the upper or lower category within the band, as described in the table below. Then, working from the underlined mark, examiners fine tune within the given range, going up by a maximum of 3 or down by a maximum of 2, depending on the merits and weaknesses listed.

Band	Fine Tuning	Mark Range
Good	very good	35 34 33 <u>32</u> 31 30
	good (with some minor qualifications)	29 28 27 <u>26</u> 25 24
Satisfactory	competent	23 22 21 <u>20</u> 19 18
	Just adequate	17 16 15 <u>14</u> 13 12
Poor	weak	11 10 9 <u>8</u> 7 6
	very Weak	5 4 3 <u>2</u> 1 0

An illustration of how to apply the mark scheme:

If the first impression puts the answer into the *satisfactory* band, the examiner uses evidence from the candidate's text to decide whether the work best matches a 'competent' level, or a 'just adequate' level. If there is, for example, weakness in expression, 'just adequate' would be a closer match. The examiner then uses evidence such as the number of errors and deficiencies in vocabulary, to work upwards or downwards from a mark of 14. If there are a large number of vocabulary errors, the final mark would

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## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

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### **General Comments**

The theme of the May/June 2000 examination paper was that of bio-diversity. Most candidates seemed intrigued by this topic, especially by the thought of a career as a taxonomist.

There were no questions on the Comprehension passage requiring candidates to use their own words, other than the vocabulary item and question (n) where a phrase from the passage needed rewording. This resulted in rather higher scores than usual for the Comprehension.

There were a few summaries of excessive length this year. Candidates responded to the audience factor in the task in a lively way. However, extensive verbatim copying continues to be very much in evidence. Though candidates can score some content points when copying, they score nothing for expression if the copying is verbatim.

All the essay topics this time were found attractive and there was a wide range of modes of discourse and styles of writing here.

### **Comments on individual questions**

#### **Comprehension**

Candidates found most questions here accessible because they could be directly answered from the passage. The question which provided the greatest variety of answers was (1) – Why do you think the carpenter bees were compared to bears? This required a straightforward, explicit response: they were furry and described as 'growling'. Candidates, though, were often determined to find hidden depths here and answers ranged widely. Some offered a casual association: 'They both like honey' and others explored the habits and likely mental set of these creatures ingeniously: 'They both are skilful hunters and pretend to be moving around casually when they are really bent on catching their prey'. Question (n) – Give another phrase for 'filled me with tremendous delight' is an example of the way some candidates lose marks through being insufficiently precise. Most could have offered something about 'great joy or pleasure' but many settled for the loosely associated 'made me excited', which was not accepted. As usual the vocabulary items in question (f) proved most difficult.

In our last report, the matter of setting out answers to the Comprehension Section was raised. This year, most followed the order of the questions and this was easier for markers.

#### **Summary and Directed Writing**

In the last report we noted with concern the increasing tendency for candidates to copy the passage verbatim. Some candidates made no attempt to summarise, merely stopping when they more or less reached the word limit. Others simply wrote the opening phrase 'Ladies and gentlemen...' then copied every other word. It should be understood that marks are lost heavily by doing this since nothing can be scored on

expression or for choosing a style suitable for the given audience. On the other hand, many relished the idea of giving a talk to their peers on such an unusual choice of career. Entering into the spirit of the thing some candidly opened with such remarks as "What on earth is a taxonomist? I expect you all want to know..." then continued in a suitably relaxed but consultative style to write an engaging talk. One or two rightly pointed out that taxonomists seem to be a rare species themselves, so making an amusing but just parallel, based on careful reading of the passage.

Generally, though this question is being tackled better year by year by some candidates, who have become familiar with what is required and write cogently, sometimes with considerable accuracy and an appropriate sense of style for the purpose. The habit of copying straight from the text is something which should be avoided.

### **The Essay**

The topics, including the picture questions, were all quite popular this year. Those who chose topic (a) – 'The next great challenge' sometimes ignored 'next' but the best wrote of personal achievements or challenges which face the world in the new millennium. 'My ideal career' often showed commitment and enthusiasm but some stock answers, also. The picture 'Hands at the window' (d)(i) elicited some refreshing essays, notably about problems of poverty and deprivation amongst children throughout the whole world, while (d)(ii) attracted some stock science fiction writing but also some very inventive stories about masterful and uncontrollable machines.

This year there were quite a few candidates who had prepared essays and then wrote them for topic (c) "As the sun rose...". These tended to be over-written and stale and very obviously not a spontaneous response to the topic.

There were the usual basic errors of grammar in the work of some candidates: errors in tenses, tense switching, mis-use of prepositions, wrong idiom. For some candidates the correct use of the definite and indefinite article remains a problem. Generally, care is taken by most candidates to spell and punctuate accurately.

Increasingly, candidates try to communicate by directly thinking in English. Limited candidates can manage this well by writing simply and clearly on topics which really catch their interest. Those more advanced show a pleasing readiness to use appropriate vocabulary. The best candidates write with assurance in their own 'voice' essays which are a pleasure to read and are sometimes really memorable.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Overall, the examiners considered that candidates found the paper manageable and that it appealed to their interests and enthusiasms. The Comprehension answers were generally good. The work on the Summary question is improving, though candidates must avoid the habit of excessive copying directly from the texts here. The best essays were again mostly readable, genuine pieces of communication, rather than mere exercises in writing.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161, GRADE BOUNDARIES

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Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	65	56	48	43	36

**Note:** Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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